

INTERPRETING INSTABILITY: CONSIDERATIONS ON THE *LIVES OF THE TEN ORATORS**

The text that has been preserved among Plutarch's writings under the title βίοι τῶν δέκα ῥητόρων (*Lives of the Ten Orators*, henceforth *LTO*) is, on the one hand, an invaluable and often the best source about the canonical Attic orators: it is, for example, our only source for the verdict against Antiphon after the oligarchic revolution of 411 and for Lycurgus' state copy of the tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. On the other hand, it is a shambles, containing dubious anecdotes, obvious factual mistakes, and blatant contradictions.

The text has been both lucky and unlucky to have been admitted into the corpus of Plutarch's writings: lucky in that this was, in all likelihood, the decisive reason why we have it in its transmitted form, as an independent text, at all. Its bad luck consists in the burden the seal of Plutarchean authorship has brought with it, in that it has almost raised the expectation that it should equal Plutarch's genuine works. Scholars have criticized *LTO* for having neither the source value nor the intellectual or literary merits of the βίοι παράλληλοι – or they have, in the usual manner of apologists, stood up for the text and highlighted the qualities it does seem to exhibit.¹ Criticism of *LTO* is indeed unfair, though not for the reasons the apologists cite.

Critics base their judgements on the false premise that they are dealing with a conventional 'work', authored by an individual (or, for the sake of the argument, a collective) and passed down in copies with only the usual distortions of manuscript tradition. Instead, *LTO* belongs in the category of open and unstable texts: rather than being preserved in a fixed form the text was constantly altered by any reader who saw fit to add or change contents. The verbal form did not claim to be of artistic standard; only the information that was provided was of interest: the text was designed to be 'used', not enjoyed for its form; hence the 'apographs' were often not *verbatim* copies but were freely rephrased. The principal mode of composition was summed up by Arnold Schaefer, in a *Gymnasialprogramm* in which he refuted Plutarchean authorship:²

Censeo autem vitas decem oratorum non multo post Dionysii Halicarnassensis aetatem ab aliquo grammatico breviter esse descriptas in usum eorum, qui ad lectionem oratorum antiquorum

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¹ With a negative estimation most recently D.M. MacDowell, *Demosthenes the Orator* (Oxford, 2009), 11; among the apologists M.J. Edwards, 'Notes on Pseudo-Plutarch's *Life of Antiphon*', *CQ* NS 48 (1998), 82–92 and L. Pitcher, 'Narrative technique in *The Lives of the Ten Orators*', *CQ* NS 55 (2005), 217–34 stand out.

² A.D. Schaefer, 'Commentatio de libro vitarum decem oratorum', in *Programm, Vereintes Gymnasial-Erziehungsshauss* (Dresden, 1844), 1–38, at 37. There is, fortunately, no longer need to rally against that theory, since Schaefer's intervention finished off the debate.

accederent: post, quum in scholis rhetorum lectitari non desinerent, a compluribus hominibus doctis indoctisque temporibus diversis interpolatas et amplificatas esse.

The most recent critic quotes these lines, only to dismiss Schaefer's theory; and the phrase 'the author of the *Lives*' is common, showing a lack of awareness of the problems that surround the production of the text.³

My aim in this paper is not only to revive and defend Schaefer's theory but to demonstrate the ways in which the particular production process has shaped the text. I undertake to show how the process of compilation brought about the features that have struck interpreters, although they become easily explicable once we accept that the text is unstable.

At the end I shall add a few cautionary considerations about the methods of investigation that can be applied to the text, and its general interpretability. Accepting instability means we have to give up some forms of treatment we subject 'intentionally' authored texts to. Both literary and historical analysis needs to be aware of the origins of the text and thus the unique value and the perils connected with *LTO*.

1. INSTABILITY

The idea that many texts' main characteristic lies in their changeability rather than an enshrined original form is commonly accepted by those working on the textual tradition.⁴ Sometimes both approaches, the genetic and the 'antiquarian' literary, can be of interest with regard to the same text. Take, for example, the ending of Aeschylus' *Seven*, where interpolations can be deleted as a departure from the original, or studied in themselves as documents of reception.⁵

The most obvious examples of instability are functional texts, often of the technical kind. Books and texts that were 'used' rather than read for their own sake were always liable to be adapted to the purposes of the 'user', with little or no regard for the original form. This may take the form of major redactions,⁶ but probably more often we deal with interventions on a far smaller scale. Two passages by Galen illustrate the general problem and the main mechanisms that cause changes:⁷

³ Cf. Pitcher (n. 1), 217 n. 4; 'the author' is freely used, e.g. by Edwards (n. 1) and S.C. Todd, *A Commentary on Lysias. Speeches 1–11* (Oxford, 2007), vii; a slightly more complex model is envisaged by U. Schindel, 'Untersuchungen zur Biographie des Redners Lysias', *RhM* 110 (1967), 32–52, at 33. The exception are francophone scholars: M. Cuvigny and G. Lachenaud, *Plutarque. Œuvres morales. Tome XII¹* (Paris, 1981), 27; J. Schamp, *Les Vies des dix orateurs attiques* (Fribourg, 2000).

⁴ e.g. H. Kantorowicz, *Einführung in die Textkritik. Systematische Darstellung der textkritischen Grundsätze für Philologen und Juristen* (Berlin, 1921), 40–1; J. Ziolkowski, 'Texts and textuality, medieval and modern', in B. Sabel and A. Bucher (edd.), *Der unfeste Text. Perspektiven auf einen literatur- und kulturwissenschaftlichen Leitbegriff* (Würzburg, 2001), 109–31, at 110–15. G. Luck, 'Textual criticism today', *AJPh* 102 (1981), 164–94, at 177 speaks of 'working' texts of the 'cook-book category'.

⁵ Lycurgus' law (*LTO* 841F) 're stabilized' a tradition that had become fluid. The text of the Homeric poems is a far more complex example of a text largely stabilized by Alexandrian scholarship after a period of wild proliferation: cf. M.L. West, 'The textual criticism and editing of Homer', in G.W. Most (ed.), *Editing texts. Texte edieren* (Göttingen, 1998), 94–110.

⁶ Relatively uncontroversial examples are treatises that were expanded to cover aspects of interest to a particular readership. This is the case, for example, with Apsinēs' *Rhetoric*, to which in one manuscript was added the short treatise *On Questioning and Answering* (περί ἐρωτήσεως καὶ ἀποκρίσεως). Original parts of proem and epilogue may have been replaced with fuller treatments; cf. M. Patillon, *Apsinēs. Art rhétorique. Problèmes à faux-semblant* (Paris, 2001), XXVIII–XXXI.

⁷ Cf. A.E. Hanson, 'Galen: author and critic', in G.W. Most (n. 5), 22–53, at 25–8.

Since many people have distorted my books ... deleting some things, adding others and changing more, I believe it is better to show first the origin of the distortion and then the subject matter of each treatise I wrote.

(*De lib. propr.* Prol. 5 Boudon-Millot = 19.10 Kühn)

Sometimes, I had written in two ways about one matter – one version in the text and the other in the margin – in order to choose one of them when I had evaluated them in quiet. But then the first copyist wrote them both, and when I did not pay attention to what had happened and did not correct the mistake, the book was passed on to many people and remained uncorrected.

(*In Hipp. Epid. I Comm.* I 36 Wenkebach = 17/1.80 Kühn)

With texts that have no author but only a series of contributors the mechanisms are still the same. If such numerous and substantial changes of his text occurred even in Galen's lifetime, it is not hard to imagine that changes amassed as time elapsed. Where a reader's experience and individual findings lead to his making isolated alterations to a text, it would be wrong to speak of a revision or a new edition of that text. Individual changes can accumulate and gradually replace larger parts of the original content, and in the end the text may look very different, while never undergoing a systematic revision to give it back its unity.

2. BEGINNINGS

The title of *LTO* already indicates its relevance for a readership in the Roman era: *the* ten orators constitute the classical canon. So 'academic' interest rather than the literary ambition of a biographer caused the compilation to be initiated. For we can see relatively clearly how the collection of biographical sketches came into being.

Every unstable text needs a first version, or 'core', which can be changed by later 'users'. For *LTO* we have to assume that the biographical series started as a collection of excerpts from other texts: we are in the exceptional position of possessing some of the main texts the core was made of. Foremost are the stylistic essays on Attic orators by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, which opened with biographical sketches. In the four cases in which we have the relevant sections (*Lys.*, *Isoc.*, *Isae.*, *Din.*) it is apparent that this source stood at the start of *LTO*. The verbal parallels (solid lines) are too close to be coincidental, and the order of information is identical. The *Life of Lysias* is a good example:

Λυσίας ὁ Κεφάλου Συρακουσίαν μὲν ἦν γονέων, ἐγεννήθη δὲ Ἀθήνῃσι μετοικούντι τῷ πατρὶ καὶ συνεπαιδεύθη τοῖς ἐπιφανεστάτοις Ἀθηναίων. ἔτη δὲ πεντεκαίδεκα γεγονώς εἰς Θουρίους ὤχετο πλέων σὺν ἀδελφοῖς δυσὶν, κοινωνήσων τῆς ἀποικίας, ἣν ἔστελλον Ἀθηναῖοι τε καὶ ἡ ἄλλη Ἑλλὰς δωδεκάτῳ πρότερον ἔτει τοῦ Πελοποννησιακοῦ πολέμου, καὶ διετέλεσεν αὐτόθι πολитеυόμενος ἐν εὐπορίᾳ πολλῇ καὶ <παιδευόμενος παρὰ Τίσια τε καὶ Νικίαν> μέχρι τῆς συμφορᾶς τῆς κατασχούσης Ἀθηναίους ἐν Σικελίᾳ. μετ' ἐκείνου δὲ τὸ πάθος στασιάσαντος τοῦ δήμου ἐκπίπτει σὺν ἄλλοις τριακοσίοις ἀττικισμὸν ἐγκληθεῖς. καὶ παραγενόμενος αὐθις εἰς Ἀθήνας κατὰ ἄρχοντα Καλλίαν, ἑβδομον καὶ τετταρακοστὸν ἔτος ἔχων, ὡς ἂν τις εἰκάσειεν, ἐξ ἐκείνου τοῦ χρόνου διετέλεσε τὰς διατριβὰς ποιούμενος Ἀθήνῃσι.

(Dion. Hal. *Lys.* 1)

Λυσίας υἱὸς ἦν Κεφάλου τοῦ Λυσανίου τοῦ Κεφάλου, Συρακουσίου μὲν γένος μεταναστάντος δ' εἰς Ἀθήνας ... τὸ μὲν πρῶτον συνεπαιδεύετο τοῖς ἐπιφανεστάτοις Ἀθηναίων· ἐπεὶ δὲ τὴν εἰς Σύβαριν ἀποικίαν τὴν ὕστερον Θουρίους μετονομασθεῖσαν ἔστελλεν ἡ πόλις, ὤχετο σὺν τῷ πρεσβυτάτῳ ἀδελφῷ Πολεμαρχῷ ... ὡς κοινωνήσων τοῦ

κλήρου, ἔτη γεγυνώς πεντεκαίδεκα, ἐπὶ Πραξιτέλους ἄρχοντος, κάκει διέμεινε παιδευόμενος παρὰ Τισία καὶ Νικία τοῖς Συρακουσίοις, κτησάμενός τ' οἰκίαν καὶ κλήρου τυχὼν ἐπολιτεύσατο ἕως Κλεοκρίτου τοῦ Ἀθήνησιν ἄρχοντος ἔτη ἐξήκοντα τρία τῷ δ' ἐξῆς Καλλία ὀλυμπιάδι ἐνενηκοστῇ δευτέρᾳ τῶν κατὰ Σικελίαν συμβάντων Ἀθηναίοις καὶ κινήσεως γενομένης τῶν τ' ἄλλων συμμάχων καὶ μάλιστα τῶν τὴν Ἰταλίαν οἰκούντων, αἰτιαθεὶς ἀττικίζειν ἐξέπεσε μετ' ἄλλων τριῶν. παραγενόμενος δ' Ἀθήνησιν ἐπὶ Καλλίου τοῦ μετὰ Κλεοκρίτου ἄρχοντος, ἤδη τῶν τετρακοσίων κατεχόντων τὴν πόλιν, διέτριβεν αὐτόθι.

(LTO 835C–E)

There can be little doubt that Dionysius' work forms the backbone of the *Life*. Use of the same source or reverse dependency can be excluded.⁸ At the same time, some smaller divergences (dotted lines) seem to derive from correction, reformulation or interpretation of Dionysius' text. For example, ἐν εὐπορίᾳ πολλῇ is turned into something concrete, a κλῆρος and an οἰκία, possibly a misinterpretation of the original text.⁹ The archon year is disambiguated, making clear which Callias was meant.¹⁰ So the wording and even the sentence structure of Dionysius' text are treated almost *ad libitum*; the linguistic form is disregarded but the substance preserved.

For the *Lives* of Hyperides, Aeschines and Demosthenes the relevant sections of Dionysius are lost. But in the first two cases it is possible to detect the same principles of arrangement and a chronological thread; the latter may have suffered from the wealth of biographic material that could be added.¹¹ The *Life of Lycurgus* comes with its own main evidence appended to the end of LTO: the decree which confirms that his son Lycophron is entitled to Lycurgus' hereditary honours. The authenticity is confirmed by an inscribed copy of the same decree (IG II² 457). The greatest disorder is, conspicuously, found in the remaining two biographies, of Antiphon and Andocides, for which there is no such starting point.¹²

So in all likelihood a first 'editor' or compiler must have taken major sources for each of the ten school authors and united them in one collection.¹³ Some smaller changes indicate that this person did not just copy but already made changes to the texts. For example, in the *Life of Isaeus* a passage from the stylistic section of Dionysius' treatise has been incorporated into the biography.¹⁴ In the rest of LTO there is no sign that later users added content from the same source. So the inclusion

⁸ Cf. F. Seeliger, *De Dionysio Halicarnassensi Plutarchi qui vulgo fertur in vitis decem oratorum auctore* (Leipzig, 1874). In the *Life of Isaeus* a first-person statement by Dionysius is turned into a general one (*Isae.* 1: ὡς ἐκ λόγων αὐτοῦ τεκμαίρομαι; LTO 839E: ὡς ἔστι τεκμήρασθαι ἐκ λόγων αὐτοῦ).

⁹ The first κλῆρος is already a change from Dionysius' original and seems to denote an inheritance in general rather than a land lot, so there may be a case of internal proliferation of interpretations/mistakes, cf. §3 (v) below.

¹⁰ Both in 412/11 and 406/5 the archon's name was Callias. The same disambiguation can be found in the first *hypothesis* to Ar. *Lys.* and (more frequently) for the later Callias (e.g. Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 7.1.5).

¹¹ There are doubts if Dionysius added a sketch to his stylistic observations: cf. the discussion in J. van Wyk Cronjé, *Dionysius of Halicarnassus: De Demosthene: A Critical Appraisal of the Status Quaestionis* (Hildesheim, 1986), 162–5.

¹² Pace Edwards (n. 1), 82–3: the only reliable biographic information after Antiphon's schooling and embarking on politics (832C πολιτεύεσθαι [!]) is situated much further down in the text (832F–833A) and pertains to the time of the 400; so most of his political career is passed over.

¹³ For the possibility that these were already two steps – the extract from Dionysius and the later completion of the canon of ten – see §5 below.

¹⁴ LTO 839E: σχολάσας <...> Λυσία ... ῥητόρων εἰσὶν from Dion. Hal. *Isae.* 1–2.

of this bit is likely to have happened at the point when the *Lives* were separated from the text of his essays.

3. CHANGES

Textual variation in our manuscripts of *LTO* does not exceed the level of most literary texts.¹⁵ This means that after a period of instability the text became stable again. The most likely cause is the ascription to Plutarch, which lent the text authority and moved it beyond the group of ‘working texts’.

In the period between the initial compilation and the stabilization the treatise circulated, passing from hand to hand and undergoing constant changes. The most important types are deletion, alteration and addition. The first two are hard, if not impossible, to recognize: in cases where we have the ‘source text’, it is clear that some information has been changed; but it is not always feasible (as above) to identify the hand of the original compiler. Additions after the first compilation, by contrast, can stick out clearly, on account of both content and form. They will constitute the bulk of the subsequent discussion.

In some instances it may be possible to find an alternative explanation for the phenomena that I ascribe to the open nature of the text, be it narratological or based on other literary sophistication. These explanations will, however, often be more complicated than the model of instability. The cumulative evidence should count in favour of openness as the dominating factor that shaped the text.

(i) ‘variorum’

An extreme form of accretion is the ‘variorum commentary’,¹⁶ a list of different versions of the same information, often naming ancient authorities. The *variorum* commentary is typical for open texts of a scholarly nature, most importantly scholia: readers who find a variant add it to the existing scholion. The versions thus accumulate progressively.

In this manner we can explain, for example, the information about Demosthenes’ education: the orator – who enjoyed a particularly rich afterlife and a flourishing biographical tradition – is said to have been taught by Isocrates, Isaeus and Plato, studied Thucydides and the philosophers Zethus and Alcidamas, and listened to speeches of Callistratus (844B–C). The named sources are Hegesias of Magnes and Ctesibius; the rest is attributed to *τινες* or *οἱ πλείστοι*.¹⁷

¹⁵ The manuscripts all descend from *a* (Ambros. C 126 inf.), with the exception of *F* (Paris B. N. Gr. 1957), which could itself be the source of *a*: this is the case in other Plutarchean treatises and the putative separating errors are not strong enough to prove C.G. Lowe’s suggestion (‘The Manuscript-tradition of Pseudo-Plutarch’s *Vitae Decem Oratorum*’ [Ph.D. Diss., University of Illinois, 1924], 25–6) that the two traditions were initially separate, and *a* was used to correct *F*. In any case, nothing in the text indicates that the scribes of the extant manuscripts changed deliberately to ‘contribute’ to the text.

¹⁶ Cf. J.E.G. Zetzel, *Marginal Scholarship and Textual Deviance. The Commentum Cornuti and the early Scholia on Persius* (London, 2005), 75–6.

¹⁷ Cf. also Lysias’ age at his death (836A) and Hyperides’ way of dying (849B–C). On Antiphon’s death(s) cf. below.

(ii) *Ill-matching content*

Many additions reveal that they were made by later hands through their incongruity on the level of content: they can (a) repeat or (b) contradict the rest of the text or (c) be without significance for a biography.

(a) The *Life of Isocrates* is particularly rich in repetitions. The recurring information is not implied or mentioned casually, but is often the main point of the statement. For example, it is mentioned twice that Isocrates had a weak voice and did not perform in public: once in the roughly chronological biography in the context of his activities (837A) and once in a string of anecdotes (838E). That he wrote a theoretical work we learn in 837A and 838F; that the only trial he ever spoke at was the one of the *Antidosis* speech in 837A and 838C; that he taught for money and acquired considerable wealth occurs three times (837C, D–E, 838A), reflecting the motif's prominence in the ancient biographical tradition.¹⁸ Aphareus is introduced three times as his son by Plathane, the second time obviously without awareness of the previous mention:¹⁹ 838A ἐγένετο δ' αὐτῷ καὶ παῖς Ἀφαρέως πρεσβύτη ὄντι ἐκ Πλαθάνης, 838C ἡ τε γυνὴ Πλαθάνη, μήτηρ δὲ τοῦ ποιητοῦ Ἀφαρέως (the third time 839B has ὡς προεῖρηται). And the *Life of Isocrates* is not the only part of the treatise that shows peculiar doublets.²⁰

(b) In other places different pieces of information are hard to reconcile and unlikely to be included by the same person: Isocrates, for example, is said not to have charged Athenians for his teaching, but later Demosthenes allegedly could not afford it (837D, 838F).²¹

(c) Finally, *LTO* contains redundant information: Dionysius of Syracuse is specified as Διονυσίῳ τῷ τυράννῳ in 833C, although he was mentioned just three sentences earlier. It is easy to see that this formulation was copied in *verbatim* from a different source in which Dionysius had to be identified. Even stranger in a collection of biographies of orators is the case of Hyperides who attended lectures Πλάτωνος ... τοῦ φιλοσόφου ἄμα Λυκούργῳ καὶ Ἰσοκράτους τοῦ ῥήτορος (848D). Both Lycurgus' and Isocrates' biographies have preceded, and the latter's identity with ὁ ῥήτωρ could be presumed.

(iii) *Lack of structure*

In addition to problems with the content, the open nature of the text and the accumulation of information without a clear plan can also have consequences for the structure. The link between consecutive bits of information is often missing or at best tenuous, in many cases formally established only by δέ or δὲ καί.²²

Additions frequently interrupt a coherent train of thought that is taken up again later. Isocrates' father is introduced in the following way (836F):

Θεοδόρου μὲν ἦν παῖς τοῦ Ἐρχιέως τῶν μετρίων πολιτῶν, θεράποντας αὐλοποιούς κεκτημένου καὶ εὐπορήσαντος ἀπὸ τούτων, ὡς καὶ χορηγήσαι καὶ παιδεῦσαι τοὺς υἱούς.

¹⁸ *Vita Zosimi* p. 212.18–24 Mandilaras, Hermippus fr. 64 Wehrli, Plut. *Dem.* 5.6.

¹⁹ δέ shows that the reference is informative; for a resumptive sense we might expect something like ἡ τοῦ ποιητοῦ Ἀφαρέως μήτηρ.

²⁰ e.g. Lysias born under Philocles: 835C, 836A; Aeschines' voice 840A, E; Demosthenes' daughter 847B, C.

²¹ For Isocrates' death at one point only one version is given, at another two alternatives (837E, 838B); Isocrates' brothers are mentioned by name in 836E, but in 838E there appears another one.

²² e.g. 849E–F: ἐνηγρίσατο δὲ καὶ τιμὰς Ἰόλα τῷ δοκοῦντι Ἀλεξάνδρῳ τὸ φάρμακον δοῦναι. ἐκοινώνησε δὲ καὶ Λεωσθένει τοῦ Λαμιακοῦ πολέμου.

ἦσαν γὰρ αὐτῷ καὶ ἄλλοι, Τελέσιππος καὶ Διόμνηστος. ἦν δὲ καὶ θυγάτριον. ὅθεν εἰς τοὺς αὐλοὺς κεκομώδεται ὑπ' Ἀριστοφάνους καὶ Στράττιδος.

The original link is between flute production and comic ridicule.²³ But ὅθεν is too far apart from its antecedent to make the sentence linguistically plausible.²⁴ Rather, the mention of the factory prompted someone (else) to insert the reference to the choregia and the privileged education of Theodorus' sons. This, in turn, led to the addition of the names of Isocrates' brothers – either by the same or by a third person. But the additions do not stop there. I regard it as likely that another person, mistaking Telesippus and Diomnestus for Isocrates' sons and finding his θυγάτριον mentioned in 839B, added her at the start of the life.²⁵

There are a few cases in which the copyist integrated a marginal note in the 'wrong' place in the text. The list of laws proposed by Lycurgus (841F–842A) ends with a piece of moral legislation suppressing lavish display by women. The next section – predominantly moral anecdotes about Lycurgus (842A–E) – starts with his wife violating that same law; so the connection seems well motivated. However, halfway through this section we find the sentence εἰσήνεγκε δὲ καὶ ψηφίσματα Εὐκλείδῃ τινὶ Ὀλυνθίῳ χρώμενος ἱκανωτάτῳ περὶ τὰ ψηφίσματα (842C). While this sentence sticks out as alien in the anecdotal context, it is perfectly fitting as an addition to the list of laws. But instead of adding it there, where it would have destroyed the transition from laws to anecdotes, it was inserted at a random joint gap within the next section. This kind of 'mistake' to some extent resembles transposed lines in poetry, but it differs in that restoration of the 'displaced' bits does not restore an organically flowing text: for it was never an integrated part of the 'original' and constitutes only an alternative continuation of a given section (i.e. the motif of moral legislation).

Some additions elucidate a marginal aspect and then drive the narrative into a different direction. As a consequence, the contribution may lose its relevance for the biography entirely. Such additions of details away from the basic narrative structure can be wholly disproportionate if the source lends itself to the easy export of information. Lists in particular can amount to considerable length, even if they add no discernible value to the subject (i.e. the orator's biography). The list of honours for Demosthenes' nephew Demochares is such a case,²⁶ but the most obvious example is the enumeration of Lycurgus' descendants. This list, possibly deriving from a genealogy, traces Eumolpidae down to a time 400 years after the orator's death.²⁷ The

²³ The comparison with Dion. Hal. *Isoc.* 1 reveals ὡς καὶ ... θυγάτριον as later additions.

²⁴ In the extreme case of the long excerpt from Cratippus in the *Life of Andocides* one 'user' has made the resumption of the 'main text' clear by repeating the last words before the interpolation (Δήμητρος ἀμαρτῶν μυστήρια καὶ προσμαρτῶν μυστήρια 834C–D).

²⁵ That she has been added after Telesippus and Diomnestus seems clear from the fact that she is not relevant for the current idea, which is wealth manifesting itself in large-scale spending. Also, the form θυγάτριον is used either as a comic diminutive (e.g. *Men. Dys.* 19) or for a little daughter (*Dem.* 40.13, *Plut. Aem.* 10.6), not for a daughter as such. For that θυγατήρ occurs ten times in *LTO*. The word is also used for Antiphon's daughter, but the reference is drawn from a speech on her behalf, where the diminutive was intended to make her more pitiable (833A, *Lysias* fr. 25a–28 Carey). On similar 'internal' mistakes cf. below.

²⁶ 847D–E: the source is stated (the decree pertaining to the honours awarded to Demochares and his son Laches).

²⁷ 842F–843C. The list does not follow the male line but contains the holders of prominent religious offices. The last person to be mentioned is Diocles, son of the daduch Themistocles (and brother of the daduch Theophrastus), in the time of the emperor Claudius (*JG* II² 4175, 4176); cf. É. Perrin-Saminadayar, 'Traditions religieuses et stratégies familiales. Sur quelques familles sacerdotales

biographical part continues afterwards, so the list is not an epilogue on the future of the family. There is no consistent interest in the further history of the families of other orators either. The list is therefore unlikely to be due to a person compiling the entire collection and shaping it with a specific design in mind, but rather to a reader unable to dispense with a piece of knowledge he stumbled upon. Otherwise more systematic integration of such material might be expected.

Another group of additions retains the relevance for the biography but leaves the narrative sequence: these tails of *varia* at the end of many *Lives* cannot be subsumed into any clear category. Rather, it seems that random information for which no suitable link was found was added at the end of the text.²⁸

The most interesting tail is that to the *Life of Aeschines*: the first part of that text follows a relatively clear chronology, ending with the establishment of a school in Rhodes during his exile and his death on Samos. The second section, on the work, is relatively brief, listing the three genuine speeches and showing that the (now lost) fourth must be spurious (840E–F). The rest of the *Life* consists of biographical *varia* in no clear order. They partly repeat or contradict information given in the first part²⁹ and so show no clear awareness of the rest. Their lack of structure indicates that the end of the text served as a depository that absorbed ‘also seems’ and piled up over time.

The most obvious consequence of the controlled process of evolution is the absence of a consistent principle of arrangement. In large parts of *LTO* an original chronological order (that is Dionysius’) is still identifiable, but the added material has not been made to fit into it. At the same time, a new alternative arrangement – common motifs or a ‘literary’ reason for giving up chronology as an ordering principle – is not detectable.³⁰

(iv) *Consistency in sources and attitudes*

The next complex of effects of instability concerns consistency transcending the factual level: either (a) in the use of a source or (b) in the implied attitude.

(a) Instead of many diverse additions or a single long block (such as Lysias’ descendants) in one place, information from the same source can be scattered over a longer stretch of the text. Schindel has demonstrated that the *Life of Lysias* draws heavily on Timaeus.³¹ On the other hand, this use is isolated, and Timaeus is unlikely to be used as a source elsewhere.

athéniennes de l’époque hellénistique’, in M.-F. Baslez and F. Prévot (edd.), *Prosopographie et histoire religieuse. Actes du colloque tenu en l’Université Paris XII-Val de Marne les 27 & 28 octobre 2000* (Paris, 2005), 51–67, esp. at 64–5.

²⁸ In the *Life of Isocrates* this is mainly a lengthy string of anecdotes and *dicta* as well as monuments (838E–839D). After the basic information on Lysias’ life, works and style, more biographical details are given in the form of mentions of Lysias in other works (836B–D): an affair with Metaneira (Dem. 59.21), followed by an epigram by Philiscus. Finally, there is more information on speeches, which could easily have been inserted in the section about his works.

²⁹ 840F–841A: note in particular the data about Aeschines’ activities before his political career and his alleged autodidacticism, the latter in conflict with both versions given in 840B.

³⁰ For example, Hyperides’ early career is sketched after his actions under Alexander; this is followed by references to the Harpalus trial and the aftermath of Chaeroneia, before the text turns to the battle of Crannon and Hyperides’ death (848E–849B). On the way in which connections and transitions can be deliberately concealed in texts with literary pretensions (in this case Athenaeus) cf. C. Pelling, ‘Fun with fragments. Athenaeus and the historians’, in D. Braund and J. Wilkins (edd.), *Athenaeus and his world. Reading Greek culture in the Roman Empire* (Exeter, 2000), 171–190, at 171–5. Such a technique is not detectable in *LTO*.

³¹ Schindel (n. 3), 38.

Even clearer, and more purposeful, is Pitcher's demonstration how in the same *Life* archon years provide a rigid chronological framework, for which he suggests a chronographic source.³² The framework is further strengthened by additional reference to Olympiads and the intervals between two events.³³ It is hardly conceivable that a similarly rigorous chronology would not have been at 'the author's' disposal in other *Lives*, most notably in that of Demosthenes.³⁴ So the focus on absolute and relative dating is not a general concern in these biographies. Rather, *some* 'user' added the information when he became interested in *one* orator – the use of a specific source brings with it a method of including information that sets apart one stretch of text from the rest.

(b) *LTO* displays heterogeneous interests, which are indicative of its open composition. A significant example is the treatment of style. In Dionysius' essay series *On the Ancient Orators* the biographical sketches served only as the introduction to the treatment of the orator's style. That aspect, however, seems to have been largely cut out at the early stages of *LTO*, as virtually nothing of Dionysius' evaluation is preserved therein.³⁵ However, interest in style was revived later and then taken from a different source:³⁶ the 'interpolator' of the stylistic remarks had no knowledge (or did not mind) what was the principal source of *LTO*, and took to a different author, possibly Caecilius of Caleacte.³⁷

Again Pitcher's findings are of great relevance in connection with *LTO*'s 'interests'. He identifies two strands of 'narrative' that he interprets as attempts to shape a series of biographies into an account of cultural history: the first is an interest in rhetorical innovations, which causes the succession of orators to be moulded into a continuous development of Attic oratory; the second is the recasting of material 'in order to make it accord with the more traditional dichotomy between rhetoric and philosophy to which [the assumed 'author'] himself adheres'.³⁸ However, as Pitcher concedes, *LTO* does not carry this distinction through consistently, and it will be easier to view the conflicting agendas as a result of the accretion of material. In some cases, philosophical notions were indeed removed from the text of Dionysius:

Δείναρχος ὁ ῥήτωρ υἱὸς μὲν ἦν Σωστράτου, Κορίνθιος δὲ τὸ γένος, ἀφικόμενος δὲ εἰς Ἀθήνας, καθ' ὃν χρόνον ἦνθουν αἱ τε τῶν φιλοσόφων καὶ ῥητόρων διατριβαί, Θεοφράστῳ τε συνεγένετο καὶ Δημητρίῳ τῷ Φαληρεῖ.

(Dion. Hal. *Din.* 2)

³² Pitcher (n. 1), 222–4; the source is possibly the chronographer Apollodorus.

³³ This procedure is not paralleled in Dionysius. There, only Lysias' return from Thurii is dated by archon year (412/11, Dion. Hal. *Lys.* 1). Schindel (n. 3), 33–4 does not ascribe the cluster of dates to a particular source but rather to 'the compiler's' interest in precise dates.

³⁴ Cf. R. Lane Fox on Dionysius' reliance (probably) on Philochorus and Hermippus in 'Demosthenes, Dionysius and the dating of six early speeches', *C&M* 48 (1997), 167–203, at 172 and 175.

³⁵ The exception is 839E (see text to n. 14 above).

³⁶ e.g. Lysias, where the first characteristic recommended for emulation by Dionysius is καθαρότης (*Lys.* 2), while the *Life* does not mention it and describes Lysias generally as hard to imitate (*LTO* 836B).

³⁷ Caecilius is referred to alongside Dionysius for the number of genuine speeches of individual orators and reported to have written a treatise on Antiphon (832E); the repeated interest in the development of figures (σχήματα) in rhetoric matches the title of the lost treatise *περί σχημάτων*: Isaeus was the first to σχηματίζειν (839F), and Dinarchus τῶν σχημάτων δ' αὐτοῦ μιμητὴς ὑπάρχει (850E). Andocides is ἀφελής τε καὶ ἀσχημάτιστος (835B), with which cf. Phot. *Bibl.* cod. 259 p. 485b (fr. 103 Ofenloch): Ὁ μέντοι Σικελιώτης Καικίλιος μὴ κεχρησθῆναι φησι τὸν ῥήτορα (sc. Andocides) τοῖς κατὰ διάνοιαν σχήμασιν.

³⁸ Pitcher (n. 1), 229.

Δείναρχος Σωκράτους ἢ Σωστράτου, ὡς μὲν τινες ἐγχώριος, ὡς δέ τισι δοκεῖ Κορίνθιος, ἀφικόμενος εἰς Ἀθήνας ἔτι νέος, καθ' ὃν χρόνον Ἀλέξανδρος ἐπὶ τὴν Ἀσίαν <ἐστρατεύετο>, κατοικήσας αὐτόθι ἄκροατὴς μὲν ἐγένετο Θεοφράστου τοῦ διαδεξαμένου τὴν Ἀριστοτέλους διατριβήν, ὠμίλησε δὲ καὶ Δημητρίῳ τῷ Φαλληρεῖ.
(LTO 850B–C)

LTO abolishes the notion that the time of Dinarchus' arrival in Athens was the heyday of philosophy in Athens, substituting a political date. This could be explained in accordance with Pitcher in the way that 'the author' removed an unwanted correlation between rhetoric and philosophy. At the same time, however, the passage contradicts both Pitcher's 'narrative strands': firstly, it runs counter to his claim that the text is shaped so as to tell the history of the genre:³⁹ both here and soon afterwards Dionysius' remarks about the blossoming and decline of oratory are left out or reduced (Dion. Hal. *Din.* 2): Δημοσθένους μὲν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ῥητόρων φηγαῖς αἰδίῳις καὶ θανάτοις περιπεσόντων, οὐδενὸς δ' ὑπολειπομένου μετ' αὐτοὺς ἀνδρὸς ὄξϊου λόγου becomes simply τῶν μὲν ἀνηρημένων ῥητόρων τῶν δὲ πεφευγόντων. The explicit statement about the decline and fading of Attic oratory⁴⁰ – a cadenza that would be highly appropriate for the last biography in the series – has been deleted.

Secondly, *LTO* apparently puts additional emphasis on Dinarchus' philosophical connections: Theophrastus is given extra philosophical credentials by reference to his headship of the Peripatos. The relationship between him and Dinarchus is specified as that between teacher and student, and Dinarchus thus turned into a man trained in philosophy. So we can see, within a few lines, both an extension and a reduction of elements suggesting an overlap between rhetoric and philosophy.

The prominence of Socratics in other parts of *LTO* is likewise notable. The number of orators allegedly attending Plato's lectures almost sounds as if the Academy spread stories about its influence on Athenian intellectual life,⁴¹ which a semi-learned reader then added to *LTO*.⁴² We also hear of a meeting between Demosthenes and Diogenes (847F) and how Isocrates mourned Socrates' death (838F). These examples must have originated from a source favouring the philosophers, as the former come out on top: Demosthenes is hiding from Diogenes, who does not miss the opportunity to score against the morally inferior orator; and Isocrates pays his tribute to the philosopher, just as Lysias did with his own *Apologia* (836B).

Far from inferring that this shows that 'the author' wanted to give his orators a philosophical air or to suggest the close proximity of these fields, I would rather contend that any consistency in such matters is absent. This inconsistency, however, is a result of the absence of an ultimate author and hence the lack of uniform authorial intention. This does not exclude the possibility that the same attitude is visible in different parts of

³⁹ Pitcher (n. 1), 226–7.

⁴⁰ Cf. K. Heldmann, *Antike Theorien über Entwicklung und Verfall der Redekunst* (Munich, 1982), 125–6.

⁴¹ Plato's pupils: Aeschines (840B), Lycurgus (841B), Demosthenes (imitator 844B, pupil 844C), Hyperides (848D). The source could be Demetrius of Phaleron (cf. fr. 171 Wehrli). Hermippus is another scholar keen to proclaim people pupils of philosophers (fr. 40–56 Wehrli) or orators, esp. Isocrates (fr. 64–77). We must not, however, forget the wider meaning of 'teacher–pupil' relationships in antiquity, cf. M.R. Lefkowitz, *The Lives of the Greek Poets* (London, 1981), x–xi, M. Kivilo, *Early Greek Poets' Lives: The Shaping of the Tradition* (Leiden, 2010), 212–13.

⁴² The confusion over the Antiphon in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (1.6; cf. *LTO* 832C) suggests dilettantes at work rather than philosophical propagandists.

the text – they may even derive from the same ‘user’. But theories about an intentional pattern or shift in *LTO*’s gist would, at any rate, require a greater degree of consistency.

(v) *Alterations based on misunderstandings*

In some instances it is clear that ‘contributors’ misunderstood the text they found. This led to wrong information,⁴³ but it has also affected the sense and even the syntax. In the *Life of Hyperides*, sloppy reading has resulted in a lack of coherence in the narrative (849A–B):

μετὰ μέντοι τοῦτο νεκρῶν ἔδωκεν ἀναίρεσιν ὁ Φίλιππος φοβηθεὶς, πρότερον οὐ δοὺς τοῖς ἐλθοῦσιν ἐκ Λεβαδείας κήρυξιν. ὕστερον δὲ μετὰ τὰ περὶ Κραννῶνα συμβάντα ἐξαίτηθεὶς ὑπ’ Ἀντιπάτρου καὶ μέλλων ἐκδίδοσθαι ὑπὸ τοῦ δήμου ἔφυγεν ἐκ τῆς πόλεως εἰς Αἴγιναν ἅμα τοῖς καταψηφισμένοις.

The first sentence deals with the aftermath of the battle of Chaeroneia. πρότερον separates two stages of the process of clearing the battlefield: at first (i.e. immediately after the battle) the Macedonians do not allow the Athenians to recover their dead soldiers, but after a diplomatic mission they finally grant permission.⁴⁴ The writer of the second sentence seems to misconstrue πρότερον and to misunderstand or neglect what it is referring to. So he adds a ὕστερον δέ on a different kind of ἔκδοσις after another battle sixteen years later, viz. the extradition of the (living) orators.

In the *Life of Lycurgus* (among others) the free handling of the text has led to inaccuracies, as the comparison with the original decree of Stratocles (*IG* II² 457) and the copy transmitted in *LTO* show. All three mention the work that Lycurgus has done on the gymnasium in the Lyceum. The decree in *LTO* (852C) has καὶ τὸ γυμνάσιον <τὸ> κατὰ τὸ Λύκειον κατασκεύασε καὶ ἄλλαις πολλαῖς κατασκευαῖς ἐκόσμησε τὴν πόλιν. The inscription is mutilated (fr. b 7–9), but must have run καὶ τὸ γυμνάσιον τ[ὸ] κατὰ τὸ Λύκειον ἐπεσκεύ[α]σεν καὶ ἄλλαις δὲ πολλαῖς πολλαῖ[ς] κατασκευαῖς ἐκόσμησεν ὅλην τὴν πόλιν.⁴⁵ ἐπεσκεύασεν is a specific description of Lycurgus’ activity: he did not build but rebuild the gymnasium;⁴⁶ κατασκευάζω, by contrast, is a more general term that covers both the erection and the equipment of a site. In using it *LTO* 852C is thus correct but less precise than the inscription, even though the mistake is probably due to a typical scribal mistake caused by the occurrence of κατασκευαῖς shortly afterwards. The difficulty arises when the process is reversed and a later user of the text replaces κατασκευάζω by an unambiguous

⁴³ On Theodorus/Isocrates’ θυγάτριον cf. above n. 25.

⁴⁴ Cf. W.K. Pritchett, *The Greek State at War* (Berkeley, 1974–91), 4.222–3: the *Life* is the only source on that delay.

⁴⁵ ἐπεσκεύασεν was suggested by A.N. Oikonomides, ‘The epigraphical tradition of the decree of Stratocles honoring “post mortem” the orator Lykourgos. *IG* II² 457 and *IG* II² 513’, *AncW* 14, (1986), 51–4, at 54. Kirchner in *IG* accepts κατασκεύασε, ignoring the *stoichêdon* lettering and producing a line that is one letter too long. Since substantial changes can be perceived elsewhere (e.g. πολλαῖς and ὅλην; cf. C. Curtius, ‘Zum redner Lykurgos. Erster artikel. Zwei bruchstücke vom decret des Stratokles’, *Philologus* 24 [1866], 83–114, L. Prauscello, ‘Il decreto per Licurgo. *IG* II² 457, *IG* II² 513 e [Plut.] *Mor.* 851 F–852 E: discontinuità della tradizione?’ in B. Virgilio [ed.], *Studi ellenistici* 12 [Pisa and Rome, 1999], 41–71), it is more likely that the two texts diverge here, too, than that the cutter left out a letter.

⁴⁶ On the history of the project cf. B. Hintzen-Bohlen, *Die Kulturpolitik des Eubulos und des Lykurg. Die Denkmäler und Bauprojekte in Athen zwischen 355 und 322 v. Chr.* (Berlin, 1997), 39, 102–3 (the ship shed, the new Pnyx). Cf. also LSJ s.v. ἐπισκευάζω II.

term (*LTO* 841C): καὶ τὸ ἐν Λυκείῳ γυμνάσιον ἐποίησε. The person who copied the text simplified the formulation and, out of ignorance of the original sense, gave it a narrower meaning that no longer represents the meaning of the original ἐπεσκεύασεν.

4. THE PARALLEL LIFE OF *LTO*: PHOTIUS AND THE ΓΕΝΟΣ OF ANTIPHON

The period of instability probably ended with the ascription to Plutarch.⁴⁷ The history of *LTO* is, however, more than the history of the text we have. By this I do not mean that the text, like the great literary texts, had an afterlife. One should rather speak of a parallel life (albeit not in Plutarch's sense), which developed alongside and independent from *LTO*.

The sequence of copying and altering led to a variety of texts that differ more or less from ours. We possess at least two other texts that are 'related' to *LTO* in different degrees.⁴⁸

The detailed and excellent study by Jacques Schamp⁴⁹ (ignored by more recent treatments of *LTO*) examines the precursors and history of the ten biographies in the *Bibliotheca* (nos. 259–68) of Photius. The church father had in front of him an anonymous treatise which he calls a ἱστορία.⁵⁰ Schamp convincingly argues that this text derived from an already altered and replenished version of *LTO*. Some of the stylistic remarks in particular have been copied in from Libanius, others probably from Caecilius and possibly a plethora of other sources.⁵¹ In addition, Photius (and/or some of his forerunners) has tried to remedy some of the flaws of the text by some proper 'editing': rearrangement of particularly topsy-turvy information, the deletion of excessive irrelevant material and contradictory versions.⁵² Some polish was added, and some of the offences against Atticist taste were emended.⁵³

So while *LTO* was already transmitted in a relatively fixed form, another copy continued as a text for use and active cooperation. The practice continued to Photius himself, who does not see any necessity to acknowledge his source more than in passing, and without any specification of the text.

The second 'alternative version', the Γένος at the start of an edition of Antiphon's speeches, shows how far apart two versions of one original text can be. It was separated from the collection and used independently,⁵⁴ and thus bears witness to the way in

⁴⁷ A work of the same title (so probably our text) is mentioned in the 'Catalogue of Lamprias', which originated in the late third to fourth century; cf. M. Treu, *Der sogenannte Lampriascatalog der Plutarchschriften* (Waldenburg, 1873), 54. This should be regarded as the earliest possible date for the ascription, since the catalogue was subject to alterations (so it was, in some sense, itself an unstable text), as the three different traditions show; cf. J. Irigoien, 'Le catalogue de Lamprias. Tradition manuscrite et éditions imprimées', *REG* 99 (1986), 318–31, at 324–5.

⁴⁸ Relationship to the biographical notes in lexica (e.g. *Suda* s.v. Λυσίας, λ 858) etc. is possible, but the matter is complicated and unclear.

⁴⁹ See n. 3.

⁵⁰ *Bibl. cod.* 268 p. 496b, R. Ballheimer, *De vitis decem oratorum* (Bonn, 1877), 13.

⁵¹ Schamp (n. 3), e.g. 79–80, 122; according to M. Heath, 'Caecilius, Longinus, and Photius', *GRBS* 39 (1998), 271–92, the material from Caecilius reached Photius via Longinus and perhaps another intermediary source.

⁵² Detailed comparisons can be found in A. Vonach, 'Die Berichte des Photios über die fünf älteren attischen Redner analysiert', in *Commentationes Aenipontanae* 5 (Innsbruck, 1910), 14–76.

⁵³ Pitcher (n. 1), 222.

⁵⁴ F. Blass, *Antiphontis orationes et fragmenta* (Leipzig, 1908), XXXIX writes: 'tota e Plutarchea [sc. vita] pendet nulliusque pretii est', but cf. below on additional material.

which the instability of a text affects not only its wording and content but also its form and use.

The Γένος is based on a selection of the material in *LTO*, with subsequent changes:

κεκωμώδηται δ' εἰς φιλαργυρίαν ὑπὸ Πλάτωνος ἐν Πεισάνδρῳ. λέγεται δὲ τραγῳδίας συνθεῖναι.

(*LTO* 833C)

εἶτα φιλοχρήματος ὦν καὶ οὐ πολλὰ ἐκ τούτου κερδαίνων τραγῳδίας ἐποίει.

(Γένος)

In the *Life* the two pieces of information are juxtaposed, and the juxtaposition looks like the typical product of a compilation of the unstable type: on the one hand Antiphon's greed (presumably evident from writing speeches for others), on the other hand the tragedies, actually written by another person of the same name. One of the contributors to the Γένος, by contrast, assumed a causal connection between the two and turned the writing of tragedy into a profitable profession.

As a general characteristic in comparison with *LTO*, the Γένος is much more ordered and linear in the presentation of its material, as well as shorter. Much of the excess and largely irrelevant material (including the verdict against Antiphon of 411: 833E–F) is missing. Whether it was cut or rather added to the *Life* after the Γένος had become independent is, however, hard to say.

The Γένος also includes little bits of information that are missing in the *Life*: Antiphon's tribe Aiantis could either be a later addition or something deleted by later users of the *Life*.⁵⁵ One example, however, strongly indicates that changes to the *Life* were made after the Γένος had first been spun off:⁵⁶

πρῶτος δὲ καὶ ῥητορικὰς τέχνας ἐξήνεγκε, γενόμενος ἀγχίνους· διὸ καὶ Νέστωρ ἐπεκαλεῖτο.

(*LTO* 832E)

εἰς τοσοῦτον προῆλθε δεινότητος ὥστε Νέστωρ ἐπεκαλεῖτο διὰ τὴν ἐν τῷ λέγειν ἡδονήν.

(Γένος)

The second explanation makes much better sense given the Homeric allusion (e.g. *Il.* 1.249), and it is reasonable to assume that it derives from an earlier stage of *LTO*; the extant text of *LTO* is the result of some disfigurement of the text that obscures the meaning of the name 'Nestor' in this context: it is clear that there have been later changes that make that meaning very hard to infer (if the same explanation was still meant to be given at all). The focus has shifted from exceptional skill to being πρῶτος (NB chronologically the first rhetorical teacher, not the most skilled speaker). If διὸ καὶ refers to Antiphon's being the first (rather than ἀγχίνους, which in Homer is used only for Odysseus: *Od.* 13.332), the *tertium comparationis* between Antiphon and Nestor has disappeared. The text may have originated from a shortened version, for which a connection to the nickname Nestor was then sought.

⁵⁵ Cf. Edwards (n. 1), 83.

⁵⁶ The Γένος also states that Antiphon taught Thucydides. Photius (cod. 259 p. 486a) and the *Life* (832E), by contrast, both call Antiphon the pupil, so the mistake seems to go a long way back.

5. WORKING WITH UNSTABLE TEXTS

After these observations on the compilation of *LTO*, it is now time to draw conclusions from its characteristic instability. *LTO* is illustrative and longer than most continuous unstable texts but by no means unique. We can see many of the same phenomena in other biographies: [Marcellinus'] *Life of Thucydides* is a relatively ordered one.⁵⁷ With the various *vitae* of Virgil we have another chance of seeing how the biographic tradition branches out,⁵⁸ and those of Persius and Aesop also deserve attention.⁵⁹ The process that generated these writings appears to have been similar to that which generated the scholia, as is the status they have among their readership. Only *LTO* faces the high expectations of 'authored' biography.

Historians have wondered about the source value of *LTO*, as it seems to juxtapose excellent information and authentic material with utter nonsense. Disappointingly, it is not possible to say that either a historical genius or a fool is behind the 'work', as both may be true. It is not possible to extrapolate from the value of some bits to that of others and describe the treatise as generally reliable. It is equally impermissible to credit 'the author' with a careful working method and proficiency in source criticism. For example, after the first, true version of Antiphon's death (which is backed up by the evidence of the attached documents), two impossible ones are added by formulations of the type 'others say' (833A–B οἱ δ' ... ἰστοροῦσιν ... ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἄλλος λόγος). These formulations should be read as typical for additions of the *variorum* category rather than⁶⁰ as signs of a historically critical mind.

So unless we are given the source and able to corroborate the information, we have to be extremely cautious; disappointing though it may be, we must treat the text as a collection of isolated bits of information, each demanding to be read independently of the rest. As shown above with Lycurgus' role in the restoration of the gymnasium in the Lyceum, a small misunderstanding can have a considerable impact on the meaning; even where information is based on excellent evidence, it can misrepresent the truth.

On the side of literary and cultural history, the text does not help us much to establish the date of the canon of the ten orators.⁶¹ For the beginnings of *LTO* are impossible to date: the only *terminus post quem* is Dionysius, but he operated with a canon of six plus Dinarchus.⁶² Other dates are of no value in establishing the time when *LTO* was established. The latest date referred to is the mid first century A.D.⁶³ But because of the

⁵⁷ The findings of J. Maitland, "'Marcellinus'" *Life of Thucydides*: criticism and criteria in the biographical tradition', *CQ* NS 46 (1996), 538–58 point in the direction of instability, even though in places she speaks of compilation as if it were a single act.

⁵⁸ F. Stok, 'Stemma vitarum Virgilianarum', *Maia* NS 43 (1991), 209–20 and again G. Brugnoli and F. Stok, *Vitae Vergilianae antiquae* (Rome, 1997), esp. vi.

⁵⁹ Cf. e.g. B.E. Perry, *Studies in the Text History of the Life and Fables of Aesop* (Chicago, 1981), 1. The process that reverses the accretion in the *Lives*, the gradual reduction and condensation of content, can be studied from *POxy.* 1800; cf. A. Lamedica, 'Il P. Oxy. 1800 e le forme della biografia greca', *SIFC* 3.3 (1985), 55–75.

⁶⁰ With Edwards (n. 1), 90.

⁶¹ For three different datings of that canon cf. A.E. Douglas, 'Cicero, Quintilian, and the canon of ten Attic orators', *Mnemosyne* 4.9 (1956), 30–40; R.M. McComb, 'The tradition of Pseudo-Plutarch's *Lives of the Ten Orators* in Photius' *Bibliotheca*' (Diss., Chapel Hill, 1991); I. Worthington, 'The canon of the ten Attic orators', in id. (ed.), *Persuasion: Greek Rhetoric in Action* (London, 1994), 244–63.

⁶² *De ant. orat.* 4, *Din.* 1.

⁶³ Cf. n. 27.

unstable nature of the text this does not exclude compilation earlier than that. On the other hand, the adaptability of unstable texts makes it possible that the collection even started with the seven men Dionysius treats as particularly important, and that the rest were added as the later canon stabilized.

Moreover, it has become clear that unstable biographies ought not to be subjected to the same interpretative methods as their stable literary counterparts: their methods of 'composition' are entirely different, influenced by their respective purposes. The key function of *LTO* was pure information. The position of the Γένος of Antiphon (as those of other orators) indicates that the role of these texts is not that of an independent reading. They do not exist primarily to be studied for their own sake, but as complements to the study of the speeches. At philosophical schools students learned something about the thinkers before they studied their works. Even Galen demanded from his readers knowledge of his life;⁶⁴ and the position of biographies at the start of manuscripts of poetic works or commentaries and introductory works points in the same direction. When we think of the genre and the educational background, it is evident that this must be even more likely in the case of the orators in the rhetorical schools: a basic idea of the person and the historical and biographical background enhances the understanding of the speech and helps account for certain arguments and stylistic choices.⁶⁵ In the case of Isaeus, who did not perform in court or in the assembly, the latter is arguably the primary purpose. Some knowledge about the curricular authors may also count among the cultural knowledge expected from everybody of a certain social standing. On the other hand, the lives of orators could be mined for material to be used in declamations. Some topics set in rhetorical schools draw on situations mentioned in *LTO*, while in other declamations there are allusions to episodes referred to in the biographies.⁶⁶

So the incoherent 'agenda' of *LTO* proves to be a result of the multiple influences on the text, which are an inextricable part of its history and directly linked with its function. Plutarch and Satyrus, authors of 'literary' biographies, certainly intended more with their works, even if it is open to debate what exactly.

Although it cannot be ruled out that some people who used and contributed to *LTO* tried to convey certain ideas or contribute some concept to it, I hope to have shown that such attempts have proved futile: the innate chaos of the unstable text has prevented any

⁶⁴ J. Mansfeld, *Prolegomena: Questions to be Settled Before the Study of an Author, or a Text* (Leiden, 1994), 6, 178–80; Galen 19.53 Kühn.

⁶⁵ Cf. Antiphon's position at the start of the tradition and the absence of σχήματα in his speeches; the explanation of his defence speech by the use of the document; Demosthenes' style and his education by an actor; and the connection between his religious offices and argumentation in Lysurgus. Something similar may be referred to by Philostratus (*VS* 479) when he speaks of 'our discussions about sophists' (τῶν ... σπουδασθέντων ποτὲ ἡμῖν ὑπὲρ σοφιστῶν). On a related function of Libanius' *Hypotheses* to Demosthenes' speeches cf. C.A. Gibson, 'The agenda of Libanius' hypotheses to Demosthenes', *GRBS* 40 (1999), 171–202, at 193–202. These summaries may constitute the next step in the introduction, when students turned to specific speeches.

⁶⁶ Among the declamation topics is the accusation speech against Phryne (cf. 849E); Isocrates' known abstention from public speaking (837A) led to the invention of a decree that forbade him to speak, against which he has to defend himself; cf. R. Kohl, *De scholasticarum declamationum argumentis ex historia petitis* (Paderborn, 1915), nos. 223, 227. Either a false anecdote or a declamation topic that crept into the biography is Hyperides' proposal to honour Iolas (849F; Kohl no. 259). Libanius' reference to Demosthenes attending Isocrates' and Isaeus' lessons (*Decl.* 23.32) must be owed to the later tradition. Aelius Theon in his precepts alludes to the anecdote about Demosthenes placing ὑπόκρισις first, second and third among the rhetorical *officia* (p. 104.31–2 ~ 845B).

such undertaking from having a significant impact, and the whole cannot be said to conform to any idea of literary design. Once we realize how the text works – that it is a *textus* of information ‘woven together’ by different people – it is possible to see that we should be wary of looking for a unitary source and design which formed the ‘work’ and of playing ‘literary’ games without clear awareness and consideration of their limits.

Instead, *LTO* is interesting in its own right for what it is. For, what the text gives us is an insight into the dissemination of knowledge, the way ‘educational’ material was proliferated, replicated and put to use. We have here an example of what people read to inform themselves about the authors of their canon, and a demonstration of how much they (mis-)understood and what they were willing to accept or were able to question. From *LTO* it becomes clear that it would be wildly optimistic always to expect a sophisticated reading list including Theopompus and Plutarch when people set out to read Demosthenes or to write speeches ‘for him’.⁶⁷ Unfortunately, it is out of reach for us to know whether the information provided derives from teachers or from students who read beyond the syllabus.

LTO complements the view of intellectual culture beyond the high level of Plutarch and others; it is probably situated at a formative stage. It thus adds to the evidence we have on the educational papyri from Egypt – and it may in this way be of greater use to us than a text that informs us about the agenda of some anonymous author.

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⁶⁷ Cf. C.A. Gibson, ‘Learning Greek history in the ancient classroom. The evidence of the treatises on *progymnasmata*’, *CPh* 99 (2004), 103–29, at 116–17 on historical authors recommended for preparation by rhetoricians. It would probably be asking too much of the ancient educational standards to assume that Theon’s long list, rather than some more easily digestible material such as *LTO*, was used in less elite educational establishments.